

RAM AIR TURBINE ENHANCEMENT FOR AUXILIARY POWER UNIT
REPLACEMENT

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Dedicated to my beloved mother, Fatima Ali and my father Mohammad Saad. To my supervisor, Dr. Sofian Bin Mohd, Dr. Mohd Fadhli Bin Zulkafli and friends for all of their love, endless support and encouragement



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ABSTRACT

Fossil fuels are currently the primary energy source of aircraft and cause harm to the environment. This study highlights the use of clean energy instead of fossil fuels in aircraft. This work aimed to study the possibility of dispensing auxiliary power unit (APU) in aircraft powered by fossil fuels to reduce air pollution and the total fuel cost used in aircraft. Multiple drawbacks were recorded from APU usage, such as relatively high operating cost, undesired emissions, and noise. In this project, ram air turbine (RAT), which are already equipped in aircraft, was enhanced to generate the amount of energy produced by APU. Two approaches were adopted in order to achieve the goal. The number of RAT units in the aircraft body were increased, and the classical RAT design was improved by adding a counter-rotating system (counter-rotating RAT - CRRAT). The design of RAT blades was based on blade element momentum (BEM) theory. The performance of RAT and CRRAT was analyzed using FLUENT software. The adopted numerical scheme was the Navier–Stokes equation with $k-\omega$ (SST) turbulence modeling. In order to numerically simulate the actual turbine operation, the dynamic mesh and user define function (UDF) were used to revolve the rotor turbine via wind. This study was performed in two stages. The first stage was conducted to evaluate the power produced from a single-rotor RAT. Three RATs were required to fulfill the APU power output, and the best location for RAT placement was under the wings and the belly of the aircraft. The second stage aimed to evaluate the amount of power generated from CRRAT and select the optimum axial distance of CRRAT. Results indicated that the optimum axial distance was 0.087 of rotor diameter, and the efficiency increased to 81.63% compared to that of the single-rotor RAT (conventional RAT). The power output of CRRAT placed at the optimum axial distance was assessed. The power produced by CRRAT was in positive agreement with simulation results. Thus, CRRAT could be used for all aircraft equipped with traditional RAT.

ABSTRAK

Bahan api fosil kini merupakan sumber tenaga utama pesawat dan menyebabkan kerosakan kepada alam sekitar. Kajian ini menyerlahkan penggunaan tenaga bersih dan bukannya bahan api fosil dalam pesawat. Kerja ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kemungkinan pengeluaran auxiliary power unit (APU) di dalam pesawat yang dikuasai oleh bahan api fosil bagi mengurangkan pencemaran udara dan jumlah biaya bahan bakar yang digunakan oleh pesawat. Kegagalan berganda telah direkod daripada penggunaan APU, seperti kos operasi yang agak tinggi, pelepasan yang tidak diinginkan, dan bunyi bising. Didalam projek ini, ram air turbine (RAT) telah dilengkapi dengan pesawat, untuk mempertingkatkan dan menghasilkan jumlah tenaga yang sama dihasilkan oleh APU. Dua tindakan telah diambil untuk mencapai matlamat ini. Bilangan unit RAT di dalam pesawat telah meningkat, dan reka bentuk RAT klasik telah diperbaiki dengan tambahan sistem counter-rotating (counter-rotating RAT - CRRAT). Reka bentuk bilah RAT berdasarkan pada momentum elemen bilah (BEM). Prestasi RAT dan CRRAT dianalisis menggunakan kaedah program FLUENT. Skema berangka yang digunakan adalah persamaan Navier-Stokes dengan pemodelan turbulensi $k-\omega$ (SST). Untuk mensimulasikan operasi turbin sebenar secara berangka, fungsi dinamik dan fungsi didefinisikan pengguna (UDF) digunakan untuk memutar turbin rotor melalui angin. Kajian ini dilakukan didalam dua peringkat. Peringkat pertama yang dijalankan adalah untuk menilai kuasa yang dihasilkan dari RAT tunggal-pemutar. Tiga RAT diperlukan untuk memenuhi output kuasa APU, dan lokasi terbaik untuk penempatan RAT berada di bawah sayap dan perut pesawat. Peringkat kedua pula bertujuan untuk menilai jumlah kuasa yang dihasilkan oleh CRRAT dan pilihan jarak paksi optimum CRRAT. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa jarak paksi optimum adalah 0.087 diameter pemutar, dan kecekapannya meningkat kepada 81.63% berbanding dengan RAT tunggal-rotor (RAT konvensional). Output kuasa CRRAT yang diletakkan pada jarak paksi optimum telah diakses. Kuasa yang dihasilkan oleh CRRAT adalah positif, sama dengan persetujuan keputusan simulasi. Oleh itu, CRRAT boleh digunakan untuk semua pesawat yang dilengkapi dengan RAT tradisional.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xviii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xx
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	2
1.3 Objectives of the Research	3
1.4 Scope of Study	3
1.5 Contribution of Research	4
1.6 Overview of The Thesis	4

CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1	Introduction	6
2.2	Introducing the Concept of Ram Air Turbine (RAT)	6
2.3	Operational Limitations of Ram Air Turbine	8
2.3.1	Effect of Temperature and Altitude	9
2.3.2	Maximum Air Velocity at the Inlet	9
2.4	Ram Air Turbine Scenario in Some Selected Aircraft	10
2.5	Location Selection of Ram Air Turbine	11
2.6	Ram Air Turbine in Commercial Aircrafts: Situation, Components and Operation Procedures	11
2.7	Steps describing the operation procedures of a RAT	12
2.8	The Importance Needs of RAT Models Simulation and Configurations	12
2.9	Auxiliary Power Unit	13
2.10	Wind Turbine Specifications	17
2.10.1	Lift, Drag and Moment Coefficients	18
2.10.2	Definitions of lift, drag and pitching moment	18
2.10.3	Tip Speed Ratio	19
2.10.4	Number of blades	20
2.11	The Blade Element Momentum Theory	20
2.11.1	Airfoil Behavior	21
2.11.2	Airfoil Selection	22
2.12	Computational Fluid Dynamic (CFD) approaches	24
2.13	Horizontal Axis Wind Turbine CFD Modeling	24
2.14	Turbulent Models of CFD Software	25
2.15	Wind Energy Technique as Alternative Source of Energy	26
2.16	Specifications Counter Rotating Wind Turbine	29

CHAPTER 3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	34
3.1	Introduction	34
3.2	Flow Chart of Study Process	35
3.3	Numerical Method	36
3.3.1	Geometry and Domain	36
3.3.2	Mesh Topologies	40
3.3.3	Pre- process (setup)	51
3.3.4	Dynamic Mesh	53
3.4	Blade Element Momentum (BEM) Theory	54
	Outcomes	
3.4.1	The Mathematical Model	55
3.2.2	Numerical Calculations for Optimizing Power Coefficient	61
3.4.3	Validation of the BEM Theory Analysis	65
3.5	Power Calculation	65
3.5.1	Calculation Power	65
3.5.2	Experimental Power	66
3.5.3	Experimental Power (dependence on rpm)	66
3.6	Experimental Setup	66
3.6.1	Tools and Equipment's	67
3.6.2	Implementation of Conversion Real Turbine System	77
3.6.3	Fabrication of Developed Version Ram Air Turbine	78
CHAPTER 4	AIRFOIL AND 3D ROTOR ANALYSIS	83
4.1	Numerical results for airfoil	83
4.1.1	Drag coefficient, lift coefficient and angle of attack	83
4.1.2	Examine the Pressure Distribution Near The	85

	Airfoil	
4.1.3	Examine the velocity distribution near the airfoil	90
4.1.4	Validity of airfoil FX63-137	94
4.1.5	Summary	95
4.2	3D Rotor Analysis	96
4.2.1	Numerical Simulation	96
4.2.2	Experimental results of case study	99
4.2.3	Validity of Numerical and Experimental Results	101
CHAPTER 5	ANALYSIS OF RAT LOCATION IN AIRCRAFT	103
5.1	Introduction	103
5.2	Selecting the Best Position for the RAT on the Aircraft	106
5.3	Meshing Process for the A380-800	110
5.4	Aircraft Numerical Simulation results	111
5.4.1	Aircraft Without the RAT and its Validation Model	111
5.4.2	Aerodynamic Forces Acting on the Aircraft at Different Positions	112
5.4.3	Pressure Contour of the RAT at Different Positions	113
5.4.4	Velocity Contour of the RAT at Different Positions	118
5.5	Summary	121
CHAPTER 6	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION COUNTER ROTATING RAM AIR TURBINE	123
6.1	Introduction	123
6.2	Grid Size Analysis	123

6.3 Rotor blade axial distance analysis	124
6.4 SRRAT and RATCR Performance	131
6.5 SRRAT Performance at High Altitude	135
6.6 Experimental Results of Counter Rotating Ram Air Turbine System	136
6.7 Validity of Numerical and Experimental Results	138
6.8 Summary	139
6.9 Stress Analysis	140
6.9.1 Stress Around Blade	140
6.9.2 Material Selection	140
6.9.3 Calculation of the Wind Load	141
6.9.4 Computational Fluid Dynamics Results	141
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	144
7.1 General Conclusion	144
7.2 Recommendation	146
REFERENCE	147
APPENDIX A	158
APPENDIX B	166
APPENDIX C	174
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	175
VITA	177

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Ram air turbine scenario in some selected aircraft	10
Table 3.1	Thickness and maximum thickness for airfoils	37
Table 3.2	Simulations boundary conditions of airfoil	38
Table 3.3	Simulations boundary conditions of RAT	40
Table 3.4	Skewnees quality	44
Table 3.5	Specification mesh sizing	44
Table 3.6	Mesh parameters for grid independent analysis	48
Table 3.7	Solver setting	53
Table 3.8	Boundary condition setting	53
Table 3.9	Solution methods	54
Table 3.10	Power coefficient at each tip speed ratio	58
Table 3.11	Local tip speed ratio at different sections	60
Table 3.12	The twist angle and chord length at each section	61
Table 3.13	Axial induction factor at each section	63
Table 4.1	Lift coefficient at 0^0 angle of attack	83
Table 4.2	XFOIL and ANSYS results compared with References	95
Table 4.3	The average drag force at different wind speed	96
Table 4.4	Results of experimental testing	101
Table 4.5	Comparison of power output between Numerical and Experimental results	102
Table 5.1	Different RAT positions on the aircraft	109
Table 6.1	Power of rotor calculation	136
Table 6.2	Properties of the Aluminum 2024 used in the design	140

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Battery used to store RAT power	7
Figure 2.2	Airbus A380 Ram Air Turbine (RAT)	7
Figure 2.3	Operational limitations of ram air turbine	8
Figure 2.4	Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) for A320 family	14
Figure 2.5	Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) in aircraft tail	15
Figure 2.6	Battery used to store APU power	16
Figure 2.7	Battery used to store the power produced from APU and RAT	17
Figure 2.8	Cross-section blade	22
Figure 2.9	Comparison between FX63-137, E387 and S826	23
Figure 2.10	Airborne wind turbine	28
Figure 3.1	Airfoils geometry	36
Figure 3.2	Boundary zone for airfoil	37
Figure 3.3	(a) Rotor dimension (b) Stationary domain dimension	39
Figure 3.4	RAT model in boundary domain	40
Figure 3.5	Mesh around airfoil	41
Figure 3.6	(a) Rotor edge sizing (b) Rotor face sizing (c) Rotor face and edge (d) Mesh around the rotor	42
Figure 3.7	SRRAT (a) Rotor edge sizing (b) Rotor face sizing (c) Rotor face sizing and edge sizing	45
Figure 3.8	CRRAT (a) Rotor edge sizing (b) Rotor face sizing (c) Rotor face sizing and edge sizing	46
Figure 3.9	(a) Mesh around SRRAT, (b) Mesh around CRRAT	48
Figure 3.10	Coarse mesh (a) skewness quality (b) orthogonal quality	49
Figure 3.11	Medium mesh (a) skewness quality (b) orthogonal quality	49

Figure 3.12	Fine mesh (a) skewness quality (b) orthogonal quality	50
Figure 3.13	Fluent solver start screen	51
Figure 3.14	User defined function (UDF) code	52
Figure 3.15	Process flow diagram	52
Figure 3.16	Dynamic mesh setup	54
Figure 3.17	Blade with small element	56
Figure 3.18	Forces and velocities on airfoil with wind velocities	57
Figure 3.19	Power coefficient C_p Vs tip speed ratio TSR	58
Figure 3.20	Blade pitch angle and chord length at section	61
Figure 3.21	Flow diagrams for optimization of power coefficient	64
Figure 3.22	TSR Vs power coefficient at $cl/cd=25$	65
Figure 3.23	Schematic diagram of wind turbine system	67
Figure 3.24	Digital tachometer	68
Figure 3.25	Digital multimeter	69
Figure 3.26	Blade fabricated by 3D printer	69
Figure 3.27	Magnetic pieces	70
Figure 3.28	Armature of permanent magnet generator	71
Figure 3.29	(a) Generator brushes (b) Specification PM generator	71
Figure 3.30	Components of a typical automotive alternator: (a) and (b) Stator of automotive alternator shows the teeth and slots (c) rotor and (d) power electronics	73
Figure 3.31	Alternator charging system circuit	74
Figure 3.32	(a) Slip ring (b) Slip ring specification	75
Figure 3.33	Cross section of a typical storage battery	76
Figure 3.34	Resistance load	77
Figure 3.35	All turbine system installed on the car	78
Figure 3.36	Generator inside big bearing	79
Figure 3.37	Whole counter rotating system	79
Figure 3.38	Base with shaft	80
Figure 3.39	Bearing with shaft	80
Figure 3.40	Front view of generator	81

Figure 3.41	Side view of generator	81
Figure 3.42	Blades connected with generator	82
Figure 3.43	Whole counter rotating system	82
Figure 4.1	The comparisons of six airfoils based on C_l/C_d coefficient versus α°	84
Figure 4.2	The comparisons of six airfoils based on lift coefficient Vs drag coefficient	84
Figure 4.3	(a) Pressure contour around airfoils at 0° angle of attack	86
	(b) Pressure contour around airfoils at 7° angle of attack	87
	(c) Pressure contour around airfoils at 12° angle of attack	88
	(d) Pressure contour around airfoils at -7° angle of attack	89
Figure 4.3	(a) Velocity contour around airfoils at 0° angle of attack	90
	(b) Velocity contour around airfoils at 7° angle of attack	91
	(c) Velocity contour around airfoils at 12° angle of attack	92
	(d) Velocity contour around airfoils at -7° angle of attack	93
Figure 4.5	The validation results for FX63-137 of FLUENT, XFOIL, and experimental (a) lift coefficient Vs angle of attack α° (b) lift coefficient C_l versus drag coefficient C_d .	94
Figure 4.6	Velocity vector direction around model	97
Figure 4.7	Pressure contour in the Y-Z plane at (a) Velocity 33.33m/s (b) Velocity 22.22 m/s	97
Figure 4.8	Velocity contour and streamline in the Y-Z plane at different time step	98
Figure 4.9	RPM and Torque of the turbine rotor	98
Figure 4.10	Tachometer measurement at speed 120 km/h	99
Figure 4.11	Current measuring at speed 110 km/h	100
Figure 4.12	Voltage measuring at 110km/h	100
Figure 4.13	Comparison of power output from experimental and numerical result	102
Figure 5.1	Real size of the A380 geometry (a) real dimensions of the side	104

	view (b) side view of the A380 generated by SolidWorks (c) real dimensions of the front view and (d) front view of the A380 generated by SolidWorks	
Figure 5.2	Original position of the RAT on the A380 aircraft	106
Figure 5.3	Proposed position on the aircraft belly	107
Figure 5.4	Position of the electrical power receptacle and potable water drain panel	108
Figure 5.5	Aircraft geometry	110
Figure 5.6	Mesh around the aircraft	111
Figure 5.7	Pressure contour of the RAT under the wing position	114
Figure 5.8	Pressure contour of the aircraft	115
Figure 5.9	Pressure contour of the RAT under the belly	115
Figure 5.10	Pressure contour of the aircraft	116
Figure 5.11	Pressure contour of the RAT at the nose position	116
Figure 5.12	Pressure contour for the aircraft	117
Figure 5.13	Pressure contour of the RAT at the tail position	117
Figure 5.14	Pressure contour for the aircraft	118
Figure 5.15	Velocity contour of the RAT under the wing position	119
Figure 5.16	Velocity contour of the RAT under the belly-fairing position	119
Figure 5.17	Velocity contour of the RAT at the nose position	120
Figure 5.18	Velocity contour of the RAT at the tail position	120
Figure 6.1	Relationship between rpm and time step	124
Figure 6.2	Moment coefficient at an axial distance of 10 cm. (a) front rotor (b) rear rotor	125
Figure 6.3	Moment coefficient at an axial distance of 14 cm. (a) front rotor (b) rear rotor	126
Figure 6.4	Moment coefficient at an axial distance of 17 cm. (a) front rotor (b) rear rotor	127
Figure 6.5	Relationships between rpm and time step	128
Figure 6.6	Velocity streamline at axial distance (a)10cm (b)14cm (c)17cm	129
Figure 6.7	Separation of counter rotating at axial distance 17 cm	131

Figure 6.8	Comparison between SRRAT and CRRAT at axial distance 14cm	132
Figure 6.9	Velocity streamline (a) at time 0.004 s axial distance 14cm (b) at time 0.006 s axial distance 14 cm (c) single rotor	133
Figure 6.10	Streamline and vector contour when the model rotate (a)SRRAT(b) CRRAT	134
Figure 6.11	Relationship between rpm and time step	136
Figure 6.12	Installation of counter rotating system on top car	137
Figure 6.13	Voltage measuring for (a) Entire system (b) Rear rotor only	138
Figure 6.14	Maximum stress on blade (a) front view (b) rear view	142
Figure 6.15	Maximum displacement for blade	143



LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATION

V	Air Velocity m/s
Re	Reynolds number
T	Air temperature k
L	Lift force
D	Drag force
R	Radius
r	Local radius
P	Power
C_p	Power coefficient
C_L	Lift coefficient
C_D	Drag coefficient
T	Thrust
C_T	Thrust coefficient or local thrust coefficient
F	Tip loss correction factor
A	Area
P	Pressure
a	Axial induction factor
a'	Angular induction factor
Q	Torque
u	Velocity in direction of air flow
U	Characteristic velocity, mean air flow velocity
U_∞	Free stream air flow velocity
W	Watt

°	Degree
CFD	Computational fluid dynamic
rpm	Rotations per minute
B	Number of blades
BEM	Blade element momentum
C	Airfoil chord length
ρ	Air density
ϕ	Twist angle
θ	Blade angle
α	Angle of attack
λ	Tip speed ratio
λ_r	Local tip speed ratio
λ_{opt}	Optimum tip speed ratio
μ	Coefficient of viscosity
σ	Rotor solidity
σ'	Local rotor solidity
ω	Angular velocity of the wind
Ω	Rotational speeds

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	Airfoils coordinators	144
APPENDIX B	Dynamic mesh at different time step	151
APPENDIX C	Comparison among the RAT positions	155



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

In this day and age, worldwide awareness of global warming has become significant with efforts to replace conventional fossil energy with renewable energy. Fuel combustion related to transportation has resulted in the emission of pollutants that cause damage to human health, agriculture, and sensitive ecosystems, as well as contribute to the global climate change [1]. Pollutants can be reduced by decreasing transportation emissions through devices that harvest energy, such as ram air turbine (RAT). RAT is a small wind turbine that converts mechanical energy from wind into electrical energy to operate aircraft devices. RAT has enabled the utilization of green energy in aircraft. One of the greatest contributions to the engineering world would be the production of an aircraft device that does not rely on polluting resources, such as auxiliary power unit (APU), which consumes fossil energy and is partly responsible for increasing aircraft emissions [2]. Considerable work on solar energy has been made in the aircraft industry, but research on wind energy is limited. An alternative system to power an aircraft with air-driven energy is challenging for aircraft designers [3]. To assist in such an endeavor, aircraft landing operations can be studied because set such a technology is impractical for takeoff and normal flight operations. This approach focused on improving the performance of RAT during the emergency phase and wind energy harvesting during aircraft landing for wind-powered aircraft operations in the future.

This project (i) increased the number of RATs used in aircraft, (ii) determined the best location for the placement of RATs, and (iii) applied a counter-rotating concept. The counter-rotating system is traditionally known as a highly efficient system. In this method, the generated power was higher than that from a conventional RAT. This research aimed to enhance power output in the emergency phase to maintain aircraft flight until it reached the nearest runway for landing. The energy obtained was stored in the aircraft. This system was implemented during the landing phase because aircraft decelerate while landing. Subsequently, the drag produced by RAT extraction was not restricted but used for charging batteries instead of being lost. The target of this stored energy is to dispense APU as a green energy source.

1.2 Problem Statement

An emergency phase is a crucial phase in ensuring the safety of passengers and aircraft. This phase requires additional energy without the risks of fuel leakage, which may cause fire. In some other cases, such as lack of fuel, an aircraft cannot depend on other fuel alternatives, for auxiliary power unit (APUs). Power sources such as APU have several drawbacks that make them unreliable power alternatives for aircraft. RATs are reliable sources that need to be improved to produce more energy to fulfill the required power in emergency phase.

APUs are not normally used during all flight; they are mainly utilized on the ground before the main engine of the aircraft is started [4, 5]. Disturbances, such as noise, are common attributes of APUs and are inconsistent with the surrounding objects in airports and even inside the aircraft. APUs are fuel-based engines that emit CO₂ and are therefore critical to the integrity of the environment. Furthermore, fuel cost is a challenging factor from the perspective of airline professionals. The most significant drawback of APUs is their poor efficiency, which can be as low as 8 % and 14 % in some aircraft [6, 7]. Moreover, according to some studies [8], APUs are unadoptable and should be terminated to overcome their drawbacks.

The existing RAT is a device installed in aircraft, producing energy for emergency events such as all engines failure hence large backup of power is required for longer endurance flight which helps in safe landing [4]. RATs are idle under

normal circumstances and are used only during emergency phases, whereas other power systems, such as APUs, are used to power certain amenities in the aircraft, such as air conditioners and lights before engine is started [9].

RATs are not sufficiently durable for flights at high altitudes, and more energy than that supplied by RATs may be required to maintain aircraft operations during emergency phases until the nearest runway is reached for landing [10].

Counter rotating ram air turbine (CRRAT) is predicted to produce more energy than the normal RAT, thereby becoming the more effective option during emergencies that can be employed in place of the APU under normal circumstances.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

This study embarks on the following objectives:

- (i) To study aerodynamic characteristic of an aircraft equipped with RAT.
- (ii) To enhance the conventional RAT performance by applying counter rotating concept.
- (iii) To determine the best airfoil to be used in development of the RAT model.
- (iv) To investigate the performance of RAT and counter rotating ram air turbine (CRRAT) during landing phase of an aircraft.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of present project focuses mainly:

- (i) Conduct the testing to validate the trial CFD simulation result.
- (ii) Develop and simulate six airfoils models by using SolidWorks and ANSYS-FLUENT software.
- (iii) Design RAT blades by using Blade Element Momentum (BEM) theory.
- (iv) Develop RAT and CRRAT model's configurations by using SolidWorks software.
- (v) Evaluate the aerodynamic performance of the RAT and CRRAT by CFD simulation using ANSYS-FLUENT software at sea level and at high altitude.
- (vi) Conduct structural analysis for RAT rotor blades using ANSYS- STATIC STRUCTURAL software.

- (vii) Fabricate small scale RAT and CRRAT system.
- (viii) Conduct the on-site testing to validate simulation results.
- (ix) Evaluate the best position for RAT on aircraft body by using CFD software.

1.5 Contribution of Research

During emergency situations, a traditional RAT is used within civil and commercial aircrafts. Presently, aircraft still employ RATs as energy resources during engine faults or any other emergency. Unlike the available research in the literature, this project aimed to improve the efficacy of RAT using a counter-rotating system (counter-rotating RAT, CRRAT). The overall performance of the RAT system was expected to improve to produce a large amount of energy in comparison with the existing traditional RAT.

1.6 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 1: This chapter provides comprehensive information on wind turbine system and its characteristics. In this chapter, the fundamentals of wind turbine and its characteristics, aerodynamics theories, objectives of the research work, scopes of research, problem statement, contribution of research, and overview of chapters are presented.

Chapter 2: This chapter deals with a detailed review of literature related to the wind turbine system.

The literature review is classified into

- (i) Conventional ram air turbine in all aircrafts.
- (ii) Auxiliary power unit.
- (iii) Counter rotating wind turbine specifications.

Chapter 3: Design of the rotor blade shape and optimization of power coefficient by using blade element momentum theory, computational fluid dynamic approach and computational fluid dynamic setup for airfoil, case study and ram air turbine.

Chapter 4: Presentation and discussion of results from the aerodynamic characteristics of CFD modeling (FLUENT-software) for six airfoils and selection of

the best airfoil are presented and discussed. Results of the experimental data obtained during highway test of conversion wind turbine system (automobile fan) are also presented and discussed in order to validate with numerical results obtained from CFD FLUENT-software.

Chapter 5: Presentations of configuration modeling of Airbus A-380 aircraft and comparison with real aircraft configuration. Results of three dimensional CFD modeling of A-380 with ram air turbine and without ram air turbine and select the optimum position for the third ram air turbine are presented and discussed.

Chapter 6: Results of three dimensional CFD modeling of single rotor ram air turbine at sea level and at high altitude (at starting landing phase) are presented and discussed. This chapter also presents the optimum axial distance of counter rotating ram air turbine and compared with single rotor ram air turbine.

Chapter 7: The conclusions of the work are presented in this chapter and the suggestions for further study on this work are also highlighted in this chapter.



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